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Disability Commission Minutes 03/16/05

ARLINGTON COMMISSION ON DISABILITY
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 16, 2005

Members Present: Barbara Cutler, Joseph Giurleo, Susan James, Barbara Jones,
 Maureen St. Hilaire

Members Absent: Lin Baker, Tom Boudreau, Louis Krodell, Kevin O'Brien

Staff Present: Jack Jones

Guests Present: Town Manager Brian Sullivan, Paolo Marinelli

Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2005:

Barbara J. made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2005 seconded by Joe. SO VOTED

Peirce Elementary School Ramp:

Jack said that the Architectural Access Board (AAB) on February 24, 2005 unanimously denied the variance request submitted by Drummey Rosane Anderson Inc. (DRA), for the ramp at the Peirce Elementary School. Jack said that DRA would request a hearing regarding the decision of the Architectural Access Board, and would request the consideration of the Disability Commission to send a letter of support to the AAB for their variance request on the Peirce School Ramp.

Brian Sullivan, Town Manager, said that he decided to attend the Disability Commission Meeting to hear the opinion and perspective of Commission Members as to the safety of the Peirce School Ramp. Brian said that there is a clear line of view between ramp landings, but admitted to being a layman on this issue and requested the opinion of the Commission. Brian said that if the Commission's opinion is that the existing ramp creates a safety issue for wheelchair users than the Commission should not support a variance request, however if the ramp does not create a safety issue than Brian asked that the Commission give consideration to supporting DRA's request for a variance. Brian said that the Town accepted the Peirce Elementary School after the Architect certified that the building was completed and in compliance with all building codes. Brian said that the Town has thirty days after the architect has certified that a project is complete to make final payment. Brian suggested having a wheelchair user navigate the ramp and give their opinion as to the safety of the ramp.

Old/New Business:

Barbara C. discussed with Brian Sullivan the Commission's concern about the use of bricks installed in the path of travel on sidewalks and walkways.

Jack distributed copies of the Disability Commission's new brochure. Jack said that Barbara C. and Doreen Piacitelli deserved recognition for their work on creating the new brochure.

Barbara C. said that the Arlington Disability Commission sent thirty-nine local Commissions information regarding the 27th Annual Legislative Reception on developmental disabilities held at the State House on March 16, 2005. The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council and The Arc of Massachusetts sponsored the Legislative Reception, with the Arlington Disability Commission being one of many co-sponsors. Barbara C. said that many State Legislators attended the event. Barbara C. said that Maureen, Jack and herself attended the Legislative Reception and at the Reception had an opportunity to meet with Bill Henning, Executive Director Boston Center for Independent Living in order to discuss the circular ramp at the Peirce Elementary School. Bill Henning said that in his opinion circular ramps could present a safety problem for wheelchair users. Bill Henning thought it would be unlikely that the AAB would reconsider granting a variance for a circular ramp.

Barbara C. said that Jack and herself meet with Claire Gordon of the League of Woman Voters. Barbara C. said that Claire was interested in any concerns regarding accessibility that would interfere with a disabled voters ability to vote. Barbara C. expressed the Commission's concern about

adequate signage and handicapped parking at polling locations. Jack said that several precincts would be voting at new locations in the April 2nd election mainly because of access issues.

Barbara said that the Advocate printed on March 10, 2005 her seventh column. The most recent article was on award-winning films promoting euthanasia.

Brian Sullivan said that the Town would receive a two million dollar grant for sidewalk and road improvements to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow along Massachusetts Avenue from the Cambridge line to Mill Street. Brian Sullivan said that there would be a design process that will include public hearings before a final design for construction is developed. The Disability Commission will have an opportunity to comment during the public hearings regarding the design.

Brian Sullivan said that the Town would be purchasing a piece of equipment to remove snow from street corners.

Paolo said that he requested at the Selectmen's Meeting forty-five thousand dollars of CDBG funds for sidewalk bump outs. Paolo also discussed with the Town Manager at the Commission Meeting the concern the Commission has about the Donald R. Marquis Bike Trail not being cleared of snow. Brian said that the issue is not purchasing the necessary equipment but the lack of available manpower to operate the equipment.

Jack distributed copies of the General laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 40, Section 8J that established Disability Commissions and explains the powers and duties of Disability Commissions.

Jack said that the Disability Commission requested an additional seventy-five thousand dollars of CDBG funds for curb ramp and sidewalk improvements along Mass. Avenue.

Community Development Update:

A discussion of Community Development was tabled until the April 2005 Meeting.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 P.M.